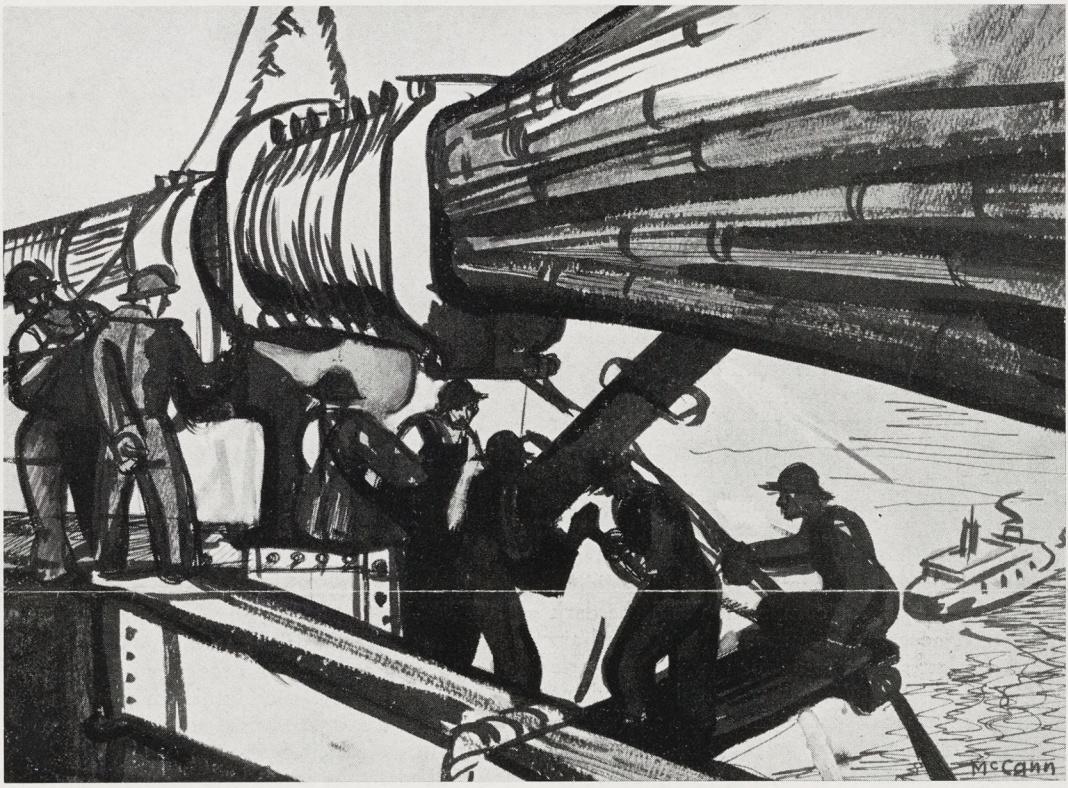
SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN

VOL. 3 OCTOBER, 1936 No. 5



UNDER THE SPLAY CASTING (Wash Drawing), *by Una McCann.*

The Saga of My Sketches on the Bridge

By UNA MCCANN

Una McCann, who, until her adventurous year on the Bay Bridge, was a student at the California School of Fine Arts, here presents her only published story.

I began hanging around the San Francisco anchorage last fall drawing the bridgemen as they went on and off shift. I liked the hats they wore and the safety belts and the clanking spud wrenches.

One afternoon an engineer told me I could go up and watch the spinning "when the safety-man goes home." It was getting cold and late, so we went into the State shack and drank hot coffee until dark. Then we went up ladders and along runways to the top of the anchorage. It was cold and confused and noisy, but the great flood lights made it easy to draw. Everyone had on about three sweaters apiece. I borrowed a bridge-man's jacket. The derrick was swinging around with big reels of wire, the swinging wheel came into the strand shoe and two bridgemen made a quick jump, reversed the wire and sent the wheel back, the cow-bell clanking off toward the towers. I've been around the bridge ever since that evening!

I then tried to get permission to go over to the island. I pestered everyone who would listen to me. But it's a rule "no women on the bridge." I couldn't get a pass. To console me I was allowed to draw around pier 24. One day the safety man pounced down on me. "No women on this pier." It looked as if my goose was cooked. That was just before last Christmas. They were raising steel night and day and I was always on hand.

I talked with Jim Ward, superintendent, "the bull of the woods," and Otto Schultz, in charge of steel erection. Finally I made a dicker with the safety man that I be allowed to draw around pier 24 if I promised to keep out of the way.

Then someone suggested that I get a navy pass to the island. I asked for one and got it! I rode proudly on the navy boats to the far side of the island, walked up the hill, through the tunnel and sketched to my heart's content at the anchorage.

Next I wanted to go to the center anchorage, pier 4. I had confidential advice to stay around the job, get acquainted and when my opportunity came to grab it. I did—and one day a boat dropped me off at pier 4. I ducked under a canvas and went inside. It was dark and empty and echoed loudly. A little steel stairway was dimly lighted. On the second floor was reflected on the front wall a huge image of the bridge and water, in color! Two holes in the floor had served to act like a camera.

It's a stiff climb to the top. I crawled out and the wind almost blew my head off. I left my coat in the shack, borrowed a pair of overalls, hung my feet over the edge and watched the ferries. I explored the catwalk as far as the next tower. It was beautiful looking through the red iron at the water and the ferry-boats with their big white trails. The smooth surfaces of steel, the rough solidness of concrete, the ferries sliding diagonally in perfect composition and the dark occasional accent of figures. It was grand up there. At last a boat came for me, with "Uncle Ike" aboard—"Uncle Ike" who had invited me to have coffee that first night at the anchorage.

After that I was on the jump to keep track of what went on. I went to Islais Creek and sketched them loading stringers and painting floor beams, sketched the units being erected and finally carried away on barges. The air was full of dust from the sand blasting and the steel yard was acres of red iron.

I made drawings of reels and slaves and sheaves and tackle, of tag-line men, and steel fuzzers and pushers and the cable boss. I went out on Bill Reed's diving barge. It's warm and quiet on the Bay at six o'clock in the morning. Divers' outfits are swell to draw and all the men bending, handling the life lines. I got seasick riding all morning up and down between the two towers on the tug while they dragged for snarls of cable wire.

I watched them take up steel late at night with all the big flood lights on and the men making dark bunches and the steel casting high shadows and shining red on the water. I sketched in the afternoons—tugs and barges and weathered men, men shouting while steel was placed slowly. I crawled up pier 1 one night and saw them working by a string of red lanterns on the

Embarcadero. And I snoozed in the sun on top of one of the towers out in the Bay.

In a deafening racket I drew riveters at Yerba Buena anchorage; sketched the A. B. Company boats crowded with men whose hard hats formed a pattern; watched painters come down through pier 24 splashed bright orange with red lead from head to foot; the aluminum painters became animated statues, coated with silver even to the lines on their faces.

I walked to the island and back on the sidewalk when the roadbed was all open strings above the water. Now the pavement is in and the walk is hot and less interesting.

It's a year since I started drawing the bridge. Now it is all but complete and I have hundreds of drawings. They are not much in themselves, but they record a year's thoughts and a year's purpose. Some day I hope to make them live in fresco.

* * *

A United States one-half dollar coin commemorating the opening of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge has been designed by Jacques Schnier, California sculptor. It shows on the obverse side the California Grizzly Bear facing forward, and on the reverse side the great Bridge stretching across San Francisco Bay. The date of the coin will be 1936.

* * *

Portraits and other paintings by Otis Oldfield and Oils and Water Colors by Ruth Armer are on view at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

WHIRLPOOL (Lithograph), *by Phyllis De Lappe.*

Post Art School Years

By PHYLLIS DE LAPPE

What are some of the problems facing the young artist trying to "find himself", secure recognition, and earn a livelihood?

One problem is that of maintaining contact with fellow artists. Many ex-students have a healthy desire to work out their difficulties alone on leaving the classroom. They want to discover for themselves what is of value and what is spurious in all they have been taught. Such a period of experimentation is necessary, since no matter how much talent a student may have, or how independent he may be, his point of view is bound to be largely determined by that of his instructor. During the art school years the student is too busy learning technique to be able to develop his artistic individuality. But the young artist must be on guard against losing touch with his fellow artists, just as he must not lose contact with the life around him. It is stimulating to discuss common concerns with other artists. Isolation, if carried to extremes, means artistic suicide.

But the society of his fellow artists is not enough. The young artist needs the stimulation of the artistically minded public. To this end he needs a place at which to show his work, partly with the faint hope of selling it, but mainly in order that he may find constructive criticism and feel that others are reacting to his interpretation of a subject. Some, perhaps, may say "Look at Van Gogh, Cezanne and others who worked most of their lives without recognition and without appreciation," but the young, creative person who believes he has something to say is not content to wait for a memorial exhibition in order to say it.

The solution of these matters is certainly important. But in the meantime how is the young artist to keep alive? Anyone who has faced the situation knows that he can produce better work when he doesn't have to worry over the whereabouts of his next meal. And here one may say a word of praise for the government art projects which have afforded many artists the first opportunity of their lifetimes to express themselves in a socially meaningful fashion.

Let the younger artists become aware of their common interests and common problems. With this awareness will develop not only a broader understanding of our contemporary life but a realization of the necessity for unity among

(Concluded on page 4, col. 1)

San Francisco Art Association Bulletin
Published Monthly by The San Francisco Art Association
Bulletin Editor.....MILDRED ROSENTHAL
Associates.....RALPH STACKPOLE, WILLIAM HESTHAL
RAY BOYNTON, MARIAN HARTWELL
Business Manager.....PLATT KENT

Material in this Bulletin is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without permission of the San Francisco Art Association. Dead-line, 1st of each month.

Reflections on Cast Drawing

I heard a lady once say, "In the old days a man would wait for perhaps seven years to claim his bride. Now, for the moderns, it is necessary to have the check of three days post-license law to keep them from marrying on the spot."

This illustrates speeded-up conditions. And Art, that patient, careful, super skillful occupation of the comparative few, is also speeded up. Among our young artists there is a burning desire to get at something quick. "Creative Expression", "Creative Work" are phrases commonly used. They are sort of slogans of confidence and defiance. And with this strong spirit undeniably existing there are still phases of teaching, in 1936, woefully antiquated.

Cast drawing is one of these!

In the great academies decades ago beginners started from drawing from original masterpieces or from the direct casts of these works. Then lesser academies, universities, high schools purchased casts made from casts some reduced in size, some fragments, and through the process of multiple reproduction casts lost their qualities. It would be a matter of interesting statistics to know how many eyes from Michelangelo's David, how many hands from same, how many slick Greek torsos, heads of Voltaire, small sized Donatellos and Jean Goujon's nymphs are scattered over the United States to inspire young beginners in their study of Art!

We are fairly sure the Indians in the Southwest who have the exhibition of marvelous drawings in the San Francisco Museum were spared much of the stupid study other boys and girls undergo. And yet, they, too, I think (though I'm not sure) are taught too much. I can't believe it accidental that their drawings are mostly on grey neutral paper and I'm suspicious of those little arty decorative trees that appear so often in the foreground. But their drawings are fine, in spite of this.

Now, what I started to write about is suggested by the two young artists whose work appears in this issue—Una McCann and Phyllis De Lappe. Both have plunged headlong into the strong currents of modern forces. Una for one year has been out on the Bridge, rain or shine, early or late. She has done a good job of recording some of the drama of this great engineering project.

And Phyllis De Lappe with the same objective dove into the vital tide of metropolitan life and emerged with an understanding. When she puts this understanding into her drawings and paintings she demands attention just as the horses and warriors do in the Indian drawings.

I questioned Una on cast drawing. To her it was "a pain in the neck". Phyllis I've been unable to reach.

If all the casts were dumped out of the schools tomorrow I cannot conceive of any possible harm—maybe to the teachers, but they, though temporarily stunned, would be forced to start anew and in the new spirit, they, too, would gain.

—RALPH STACKPOLE.

themselves if they are to attain economic independence and complete freedom of expression.

Fall Exhibition Opens November 6

The Fall Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, which includes watercolors, pastels, tempera on paper, to be held from November 6 through December 7 at the San Francisco Museum of Art, will consist of original works by living American artists not exhibited during the last six months in San Francisco nor previously in any Art Association exhibition.

PRIZES

The Anne Bremer Memorial Purchase Prize for Water Color of $100.00 has been donated by Mr. Albert M. Bender for a water color, to become the property of the Art Association.

The San Francisco Art Association Purchase Prizes totaling $75.00 will be allotted to one or more works.

The Artist Fund Prize of $50.00 is open only to members of the San Francisco Art Association.

An exhibition of the Graphic Mediums will be held early in 1937.

A dinner to honor Albert Bender and the dedication of the Anne Bremer Memorial Library will be held at the School of Fine Arts the latter part of October. Sponsored by the Board of Directors, the guest list will include members of the San Francisco Art Association.

The Women's Board of the San Francisco Museum of Art will sponsor a reception to the artists and their guests in honor of the opening of the Art Association's First Annual Water Color Show, Friday evening, November 6th, San Francisco Museum of Art, from 8:30 to 11 o'clock.

"LUNETTE", *by Michael Von Meyer*, done for the Public Buildings Branch of the Treasury Department, Washington. Mr. Olin Dows writes of the above: "It is a beautiful piece of carving . . . extremely effective . . . we hope to show it in New York and certainly in Washington."

Western Work Praised

Ernest Peixotto, prominent in the development of Federal art projects in New York and Washington, was in San Francisco during the latter part of September.

Mr. Peixotto while here visited many of the government projects in the Bay Area and expressed great admiration for the fine quality and vitality of the Western contributions.

Guided by Lee Randolph, Peixotto visited Coit Tower, George Washington High School, Fleishhacker Mother House, the Board of Education, and some of the mosaics now being completed.

The re-establishment of fresco, tempera and mosaic as mural media was especially interesting to Peixotto.

* * *

Voting by mail for officers or any business pertaining to artist affairs was passed by the Board of Directors at their last meeting. This recommendation was unanimously passed by the Artists Council following the suggestion by Worth Ryder, as contained in his article published in the September issue of the Bulletin.

Hamilton Wolf Writes—

"The Association's Organization and Responsibilities", as visualized by Worth Ryder, is truly a substantial piece of thinking and if put into effect would help make the Art Association the most influential art organization west of Chicago. . . .

If members of the Council and the Board of Directors allow themselves to be placed in such important posts, IT IS THEIR DUTY to attend all meetings or else not permit their election in the first place. Why wait for three absences to drop them? . . .

As an added suggestion, I should like to submit the following thought. The President of the National Academy of Design in New York has stated that he is desirous of arranging group showings at the Academy exhibitions to represent all parts of the United States. Under the presidency of Jonas Lie the whole tenor of the Academy is far more liberal than in the past. Why not take up this matter with the Academy? Other organizations in the East would follow with invitations. The selection of pictures, sculpture and prints should first be done through an Association jury whose choice would then be submitted to the designated Academy.

SECTION 562, P. L. & R.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
PERMIT NO. 3406

Current Exhibitions

Amberg-Hirth, 165 Post Street. Smart modern accessories, designed by Helen Hughes Dulany of Chicago. Individual creations of Rena Rosenthal of New York. Christmas Cards, by local artists. Jewelry, by Margaret de Patta; small sculpture, by Brents Carlton; pottery, by Glen Lukens and others.

Art Center, 730 Montgomery Street. October 5-October 17, Marion Cunningham, pastels. October 19-October 31, John Mottram, oils.

Exhibits are changed first and third Monday of each month.

Artists Cooperative Gallery, 166 Geary Street. October 12-November 14, one-man show of photography, by Ben Glaha.

Bay Region Art Association, 5th floor, Capwell, Sullivan & Furth Bldg., Oakland. Through October. General Group Showing by artist members of the Association. Special Exhibition of oils and water-colors, by William Frates of Hayward, California. Gallery open 1:30 to 5:30 p. m.

California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Through October. California Painting—Past and Present. Monthly Art Exhibition, by Californians.

De Young Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park. Through October 25. The Fifth International Exhibition of Lithographs and Wood Engravings, assembled by Art Institute of Chicago. October 4-October 31, Exhibition Federal Art Project. October 6-October 31, Water-colors by George P. Ennis; Lithographs by Robert C. Craig.

Gump Galleries, 246 Post Street. September 28-October 10, Water-colors by William R. Cameron; Oils by Paul Schmidt. October 12-October 24, Temperas by Ray Bethers; Water-colors by Mary Mills Hatch. October 26-November 7, Paintings and drawings by Jerome Blum.

Oakland Art Gallery, Civic Auditorium, Oakland. October 4-November 10. Annual Exhibition of Water-colors, pastels, drawings and prints.

Shell Oil Building, 100 Bush Street. October 2, Charcoals by Mr. Mosias. October 16, Water-colors by Ray Wilson. October 24, Photographs by Ed. Crompton.

San Francisco Museum of Art

Survey of Oriental and European Rugs—closing October 31—from the Kent-Costikyan Galleries.

American Indian Art—closing October 26.

Contemporary American and European Paintings from the Duncan Phillips Collection—closing November 1. Circulated by the American Federation of Arts, a national organization for the cultivation of the arts, with headquarters in Washington, D. C.

Paintings by Reynolds, Lely and Cotman from the collection of Mrs. E. Stuart-Clark—closing October 31.

Paintings by Ruth Armer and Otis Oldfield—closing October 20.

Sculpture and ceramics by Beniamino Bufano—closing October 15.

Ten Paintings from the Exhibition of Paul Gauguin held over through October. (These are excellent examples.)

Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Society of Women Artists—October 29-November 29.

American Forerunners Exhibition—October 25 through November 30. (Eakins, Ryder, Duveneck, Inness, etc.)

San Francisco Art Association Exhibition of Watercolors, Pastels and Tempera on Paper—November 6-December 7. (Last day for acceptance of work: October 26.)

Watercolors of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, by H. Oliver Albright—November 7-November 29.

American Artists Group Exhibition of Prints—November 18-December 1.

Exhibition of Bridge Photographs and Portraits (celebrating the opening of the Oakland-San Francisco Bridge)—November 5-November 26.

Selected Showing of W. P. A. Designs—November 13-December 4.

W. P. A. concerts given on Tuesday evenings at eight o'clock—October 13th, October 27th, November 3rd and November 17th, at the San Francisco Museum of Art. (Each evening is devoted to a different country—national songs of each featured.)

New Members

Lay Members

Mr. Herman A. Behrens, Mrs. Mathew Jenkins, Miss Emilie Oppenheimer.

Active Artists

Miss Phyllis de Lappe, Miss Cecilia Graham, Mr. David Park, Miss Dorothy Heston Valentine.

Associate Artists

Mrs. Donna Allen, Mr. Edward G. Best, Mrs. A. Lowell Emery, Mr. Oscar Galgiani.

Educational

Mr. Ernest H. Towers.